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ABSTRACT

Courses in remedial and corrective reading in Gary, Indiana, middle schools are examined in this paper. The basic reading skills test, which examines 20 areas of reading skill, is administered initially to all entering seventh grade students. Students who score below 50% on the test or have instructional reading levels below 4.0 are placed in remedial reading classes which focus on developing decoding skills. Upon demonstrating 50% mastery on the checkpoint tests, the student may be transferred to the corrective reading class to pinpoint and correct specific reading deficiencies. The corrective reading classes are designed for students who score 50% to 73% on the checkpoint test or have instructional reading levels of 4.0 to 6.0. Students move from corrective to developmental reading upon passing the checkpoint examination. Each middle school in Gary has from two to four basic skills reading teachers who work with the regular subject teachers in determining students' areas of need. A special inservice training session is held for the reading teachers each year. (JF)

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IMPLEMENTATION OF A MIDDLE SCHOOL BASIC COMPETENCIES READING PROGRAM:

A PAPER PRESENTED FOR A SYMPOSIUM

AT THE

TWENTY-THIRD INTERNATIONAL READING ASSOCIATION CONVENTION

MAY 4, 1978, HOUSTON, TEXAS

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GARY, INDIANA, COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION

GARY, INDIANA

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Introduction

In Gary, Indiana, there are six middle schools. Four schools house students in grades 6, 7, 8; and two schools house students in grades 7, 8. The middle school reading program is coordinated by one city-wide reading resource teacher who is directly responsible to the Secondary English supervisor. Aspects of the middle school component of the Basic Competencies Program which are described in this presentation follow: evolution of the Gary secondary reading program; goal and objectives; organization and foci of the Basic Skills reading courses; program and student assessment; training and utilization of reading personnel; materials; inservices; special projects; supportive services; and articulation efforts. Emphases are on two underlying themes: 1) The on-going nature of program evaluation and revision and 2) The involvement of administrative, teaching, and supportive staffs in program implementation.

In this presentation Basic Competencies and Basic Skills are used synonymously.

The current middle school reading program evolved from a special reading program initiated at the secondary level during the 1957-58 school year. With at least one special reading teacher, after a few years, placed in each secondary school, the reading program focused on small group remediation and correction of cases of reading disability. This program was articulated from grades 3-12.

As the years passed, the focus shifted from remedial/corrective to developmental and content area reading. During this phase, elementary, middle, and senior high reading programs developed separately.

With the inception of the Basic Competencies Program in 1973, the secondary reading program again began to focus on remediation and correction. However, because of the Basic Competencies program, the school corporation scrutinized its total reading program. This scrutiny generated the framework for a balanced reading program in the middle schools. [1] Chart 1 indicates the kinds of reading experiences and classes to which students may be exposed.

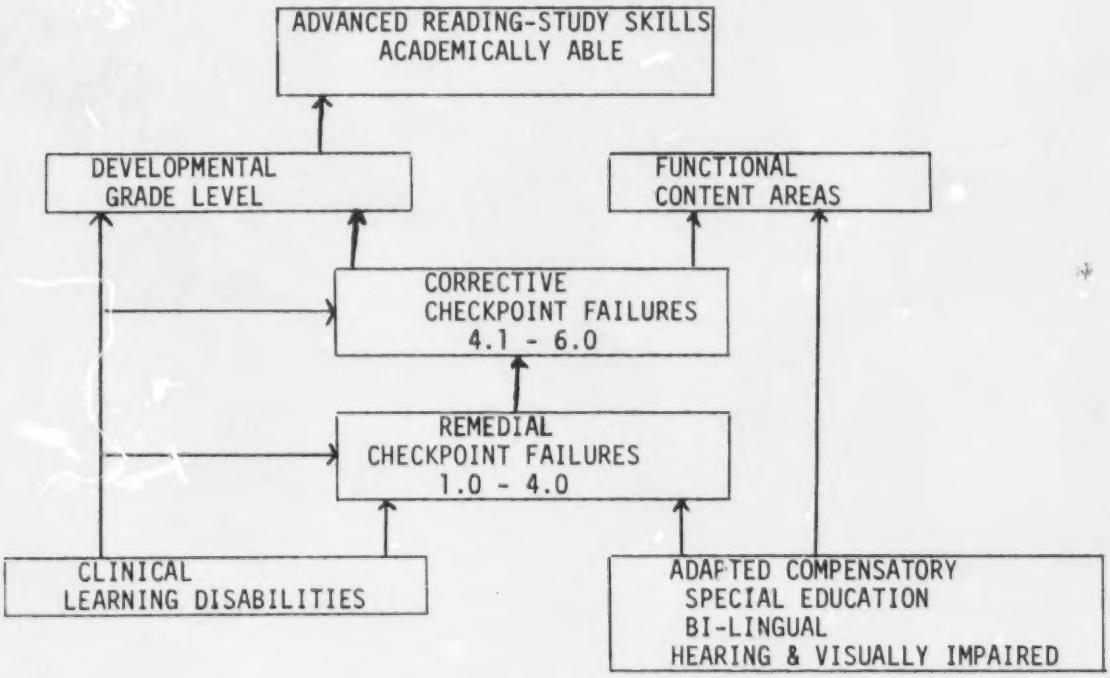

CHART 1

[1] During the oral presentation, the presenter utilized the overhead projector for transparencies which appear in this paper as charts.

This presentation deals with the two courses, Remedial Reading and Corrective Reading, which are designated as Basic Skills courses. The other categories of classroom experience designed to remediate develop, reinforce, enrich, and/or extend reading abilities are not dealt with in this presentation. However, the diagram reveals the comprehensiveness of the reading program and the relationship of the Basic Skills courses to the additional offerings in reading:

Goal and Objectives

The ultimate goal of the middle school component of the Basic Competencies Program is that students upon leaving middle school will be functional in reading at a minimal grade level of 5.0. The terminal objectives consist of the twenty Basic Reading Skills which follow:

20 BASIC READING SKILLS

1. USE CONTEXT CLUES
2. USE THE DICTIONARY
3. SELECT DETAILS
4. SELECT STATED MAIN IDEAS
5. IDENTIFY SEQUENCE
6. RECALL FACTS
7. FOLLOW DIRECTIONS
8. IDENTIFY SIMILARITIES
9. CLASSIFY
10. PREDICT OUTCOMES
11. INFER IMPLIED MAIN IDEAS
12. DRAW CONCLUSIONS
13. INDICATE RELEVANCY
14. IDENTIFY CAUSE-EFFECT RELATIONSHIPS
15. DISTINGUISH BETWEEN FACT AND OPINION
16. MAKE LOGICAL JUDGMENTS
17. USE TABLE OF CONTENTS
18. USE AN INDEX
19. INTERPRET GRAPHIC MATERIALS
20. COMPLETE SIMPLE FORMS

CHART 2

These skills encompass: meaning vocabulary; four levels of comprehension - literal, interpretive, critical, and applicative; and study skills related to the use of graphic materials and locational skills. Intermediate objectives consist of subskill hierarchies of the Twenty Basic Reading Skills.

Student Assessment

The conceptual base for the twenty Basic Reading Skills rests upon the assumption that comprehension is not global; therefore, comprehension can be fractionated sequentially into skills and subskills. This conceptual frame allows for diagnostic/prescriptive teaching, and diagnostic/prescriptive teaching implies on-going student assessment. Chart 3 is a graphic representation of the system-wide K-12 Basic Competencies assessment and placement program.

OVERVIEW-BASIC COMPETENCIES PROGRAM
IN READING
GARY COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION
PREPARED BY LETHA COFIELD SNEED

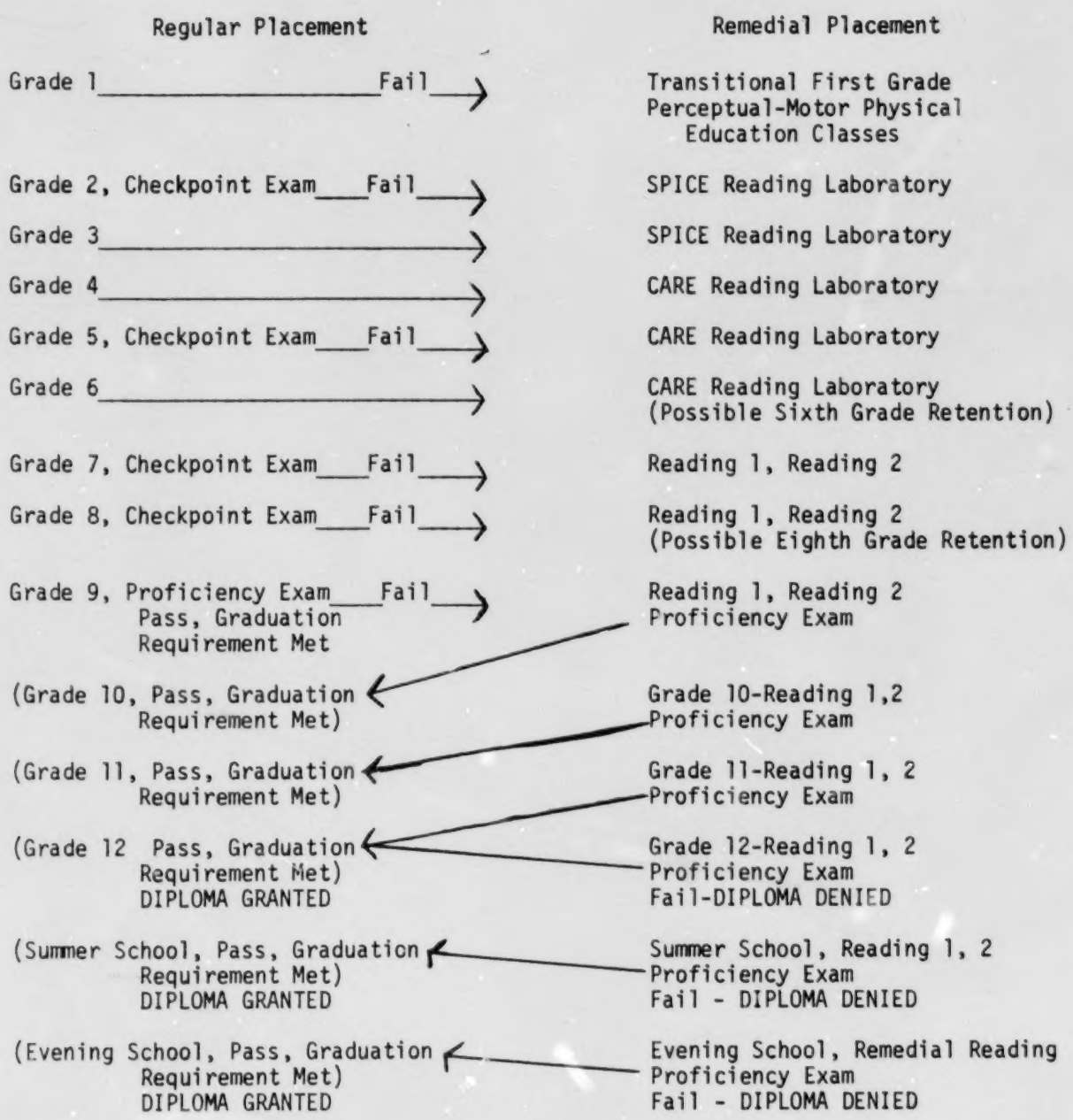

CHART 3

As in grades two and five, a criterion - or objective - referenced checkpoint test is administered to middle school students. The Middle School Reading Checkpoint Examination, a multiple choice test with three items per skill, is used to assess mastery of each of the Twenty Basic Reading Skills. The criterion is 75%. For each student, Data Processing generates a profile print-out indicating degree of mastery for each skill.

The test is administered initially to all entering seventh grade students and, subsequently, only to students who failed during the previous administrations of the test. During the middle school cycle, students in the past had five opportunities - fall, spring, summer (for eighth graders) - to pass the test. However, beginning with the 1978-79 school year, the checkpoint test will be given only in the spring and again near the conclusion of summer school to eighth graders.

Retention in middle school of some eighth graders who fail the checkpoint test at the end of the middle school cycle will occur for the first time at the end of this school year. Thus, at this point, the middle school checkpoint test will become a determinant of entry into high school.

Organization and Foci of Basic Skills Courses

Upon initial failure of the test in grade seven, students are assigned to either remedial or corrective reading. Students who score below 50% on the checkpoint test and/or have instructional reading levels below 4.0 are placed in Reading 1 - Remedial Reading. Remedial instructional focus is on developing decoding skills. Secondary to this focus is the development of meaning vocabulary, comprehension, and study skills appropriate for each student's level of proficiency in reading. Small class size (15) aids in

the personalization of instructional/learning strategies. Upon demonstrating 50% mastery on the checkpoint test or stabilization of the skills designated for Reading 1, a student may be transferred at the discretion of the teacher to Reading 2 - Corrective Reading.

Corrective Reading is designed for students who, on the checkpoint test, score 50% - 73% and/or have instructional reading levels of 4.0 - 6.0. Primary emphases are on pinpointing and correcting for each student specific reading deficits related to the Twenty Basic Reading Skills. Students move from corrective to developmental reading upon passing the checkpoint examination. For student assessment in both remedial and corrective classes, extensive use is made of the individual student profiles from the checkpoint test and in-class formal and informal diagnostic instruments.

Reading Program Assessment

Assessments of reading programs in individual buildings involve high and middle level administrators as well as the middle school reading resource teacher. Chart 4 shows the results of the fall 1977 reading program evaluations.

READING PROGRAM EVALUATIONS-MIDDLE SCHOOLS

SCHOOLS	CRITERIA*								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	R 7	I **	8
I-H.P.	—	—	—	—	+	+	—		—
2-P.	✓	—	—	✓	+	+	—		✓
3-P.	✓	—	—	✓	+	+	—		—
4	✓	—	—	✓	+	+	✓		✓
5	✓	+	+	✓	+	+	—		—
6	+	+	+	✓	+	+	—		✓

* Criteria - + Good: ✓- Fair; -- Poor.
** Insufficient data - need October 1977 testing results of Lorge-Thorndike

CHART 4

CRITERIA

1. RELATIVE OVER-ALL AND INDIVIDUAL STAFF COMPETENCE IN TEACHING READING.
2. UTILIZATION OF STAFF.
3. ADHERENCE TO CONCEPTUALLY ACCEPTABLE GUIDELINES IN ESTABLISHING THE READING PROGRAM.
4. APPROPRIATENESS AND ADEQUACY OF MATERIALS.
5. APPROPRIATENESS AND ADEQUACY OF PHYSICAL ARRANGEMENTS.
6. SUPPORT OF THE BUILDING PRINCIPAL.
7. ABILITY LEVELS - INTELLECTUAL AND READING-OF STUDENTS.
8. SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF THE ATTENDANCE AREA.

The six schools, shown on the chart as numbers, were prioritized on the bases of the eight criteria which appear beneath the chart. H.P. and P. indicate high priority and priority schools. These schools received during the 1977-78 school year special administrative, supervisory, supportive, and resource attention. Assessment data were gathered from on-site observations and conferences, interpretation of psychological and reading test results, and examination of social and demographic information.

Reading Personnel

Basic Skills reading teachers are, in general, high school or elementary language arts teachers who have been placed in middle schools. The majority of these teachers have had minimal training in teaching reading. The number of Basic Skills reading teachers per building is dependent on the needs unique to each building. Building needs vary from two to four teachers.

At the building level, each reading staff elects a chairperson whose duties include: coordinating with the principal the building reading program; ordering, taking inventories of, and distributing materials; serving content area teachers as building resource person; and representing the building at city-wide middle school reading chairpersons' meetings.

Materials

Appropriate materials are crucial to the success of a reading program. Following book adoption which occurs in five year cycles in Indiana, the middle school reading resource teacher develops a textbook guide of basic and supplementary materials adopted city-wide. A sample page from the guide which the resource teacher is currently in the process of preparing follows:

MIDDLE SCHOOL READING TEXTBOOKS
Grades 7 - 8
BASIC CORRECTIVE - 4.0 - 6.0
1978 - 1983

Title	Author(s)	Publisher Edition	Difficulty	Price	Description
TROUBLESHOOTER II	Weinberg	Houghton Mifflin 1975	4.0-6.0		Softcover. Self-study workboc Designed to build basic language skills. Students wor
Individual Books:					
Book 1, Word Recognition				1.80	at own pace, measure own
Book 2, Vocabulary				1.80	progress. Part of a set of 6
Book 4, Reading Rate and Comprehension				1.80	language arts books.
Book 5, Reading in Specific Subjects				1.80	
Book 6, Reading and Study Skills				1.80	
Class Answer Book				1.53	
Set of 6 Teacher's Editions				8.31	
		CO-BASIC CORRECTIVE			
Individualized Reading Skills Program	Durr, Hiller	Houghton Mifflin			Kit. Individualized self-paci self-testing. Each level in-
Level B, Complete (Box 1 and Box 2. See contents below)			4.0	115.29	cludes decoding, comprehensio and reference and study skill
Level B, Box 1: Pre-Assessment Tests (35 copies of the test booklet, 35 copies of the pupil's individual record card, a manual, a class record chart, and a scope and sequence chart)				36.09	Covers 11 of 20 Basic Reading Skills.
Level B, Box 2: Reading Skill Booklets (10 copies each of 30 skill booklets, 2 copies each of 32 answer cards for booklet practice pages, a teacher's guide with annotated post-assessment tests, and a scope					

CHART 5

Teachers are urged but not required to order materials listed in the guide.

Although many classrooms have materials in common, no two classrooms have identical materials. Each teacher orders instructional materials and trade books which accommodate the varying learning styles and achievement levels of his/her students and the teacher's orientation to reading and teaching.

Extensive use has not been made of hardware nor of commercially prepared systems management programs. However, teachers are now beginning to move in the direction of utilizing hardware with accompanying software in order to utilize each student's best learning channels and to strengthen weak channels. At the present time with federal funding each school is being equipped with carrels, hardware, and software for a reading laboratory.

Inservice

The dearth of training among middle school reading teachers necessitates the inclusion of inservices in the Basic Competencies Program. A formal inservice is provided for all secondary reading teachers jointly by the middle and high school reading resource teachers once per year. Formats for these inservices vary from lecture-type to participatory.

At the request of central office administrators, building principals, reading chairpersons, or individual teachers, the middle school reading resource teacher conducts inservices. Two recent inservices conducted at the building level concerned writing test items for a Basic Skills Test Bank and selecting materials and estimating readability of materials.

Another inservice involved a wide range of concerns in one building. The middle school reading resource teacher spent a five week block of time devoted to one inservice for the entire staff of forty and small group or one-to-one inservice sessions for content area and reading teachers. The three forms which follow (shown filled out) were developed by the middle school reading resource teacher for the sessions:

GARY COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION
GARY, IN

department of SECONDARY EDUCATION
LETHA COTIELD SNEED
Reading Resource Teacher
Middle School

10 November 1977

Planning period - 1st hr.

TO: Mr. Jesse Bumpers

FROM: D. Evans

CONTENT AREA(S): Home Ec (Foods)

GRADE LEVEL(S): 7 & 8

I would like Mrs. Sneed's assistance in the area(s) which follows:

_____ 1. Constructing, administering, and interpreting informal reading diagnostic instruments

_____ 2. Divising instructional strategies to incorporate the teaching of reading with the teaching of content

__X__ 3. Developing reading-study strategies for my students

_____ 4. Individualizing instruction

_____ 5. Locating high interest/low vocabulary supplementary materials

__X__ 6. Estimating readability of materials

_____ 7. Others _____

_____

_____

_____

RETURN THIS FORM TO MR. BUMPERS BY NOVEMBER 14, 1977.

CHART 6

TO: Jesse Bumpers
Principal, Bailly Middle School

FROM: Letha Cofield Sneed

RE: Reading Resource Services for
Content Area Teachers at Bailly

DATE: 11/23/77

On 11/23/77 I

met with D. Evans, , Home Economics .

at this meeting we did the following:

1. Discussed readability of materials, how to apply Fry Scale to her two textbooks. Gave me the books so that I can compare the reability estimato with her estimate. Gave her a laminated Fry Scale to keep.

2. Discussed activities which she uses to develop reading skills with her classes. Gave her home economics acitivities hand-out which streases vocabulary and following directions.

3.

4.

I plan to meet with B. Weingart again week of11/28 to compare readability estimates and to give her additional activities.

TO: D. Evans
Bailly Middle School

FROM: Letha Cofield Sneed *Lmacs*

RE: Reading Resource Services for
Content Area Teachers at Bailly

DATE: 11/30/77

APPROVED: J. Bumpers

I plan to meet with Bailly teachers on a small group or individual basis on 12/5/77.

I have scheduled a meeting with you on 12/5/77 during your 8:04 preparation period from 8:04 to 8:30 in the Library Professional Room. Please bring your textbook (s) and other pertinent materials to the meeting with you.

At this meeting we will compare our readability estimates for your two textbooks. Please Note: I am really impressed with the format of Teen Guide to Homemaking. The features which follow make it an excellent book for you to use the D.R.A. and for your students to use SQ3R: PLEASE TURN PAGE OVER

If this date is inconvenient for you, please call me at 886-6434 and indicate a date which is more convenient for you. If you cannot reach me, please leave a message with the secretary.

c. J. Bumpers

lmt

1. Pre-tests which assess pre-knowledge and reading skills.

2. Post-tests which measure growth of knowledge and reading skills.

3. Behavioral objectives which set purposes for students' reading prior to the reading.

4. Keyed marginal activities which include a wide range of activities designed to enrich and extend word meanings, concepts, and comprehension.

5. Highlighted unit, chapter, and sectional headings.

6. Modern colorful photographs of people who are real and are in real world situations related to the running text.

7. Customary units of measure immediately followed by metric equivalents.

8. Food terms glossary.

9. Food composition charts.

I would like very much to develop with you a lesson plan or lessons plans for using the D.R.A. and developing SQ3R.

CHART 8 (Cont'd.)

According to the areas of need which were indicated by the teachers, the middle school reading resource teacher worked with teachers on the following: 1) Informal Reading Inventories; 2) Informal Skills Inventories; 3) Cloze Procedure; 4) Directed Reading Activity; 5) activities to fuse the teaching of reading with social studies, mathematics, home economics, English, physical education, industrial arts, and special education; 6) structured overviews; 7) four level study guides; 8) SQ3R; 9) grouping; and 10) Fry Readability Scale. With the aid of the two librarians, the middle school reading resource teacher prepared extensive bibliographies of high interest/low vocabulary trade books for social studies and physical education students.

Building principals, in addition, use persons outside of the school system to conduct inservices. One principal in cooperation with Indiana University Northwest (Gary) and General Assistance Corporation, a federally funded agency based in Indianapolis, offered on-site reading courses with university credit free to all of her language arts and reading teachers. Classroom visitation follow-up services were provided by the professors teaching the courses.

As the educational change agents in their buildings, principals must possess a basic understanding of reading. Prior to implementation of the Basic Competencies Program, the senior high school reading resource teacher conducted a three day series of inservices for all secondary principals. Ever since that time, principals at the middle school level have been provided with informal inservices; e.g., pre and post-classroom observation conferences with the middle school reading resource teacher; participation in reading chairpersons' meetings which are held once per year in each

building; participation in a meeting attended by all middle school principals and reading chairpersons; and frequent one-to-one discussions about reading with the middle school reading resource teacher.

Special Projects

Within the framework of a uniform city-wide middle school reading program, individual schools undertake special projects such as: Sustained Silent Reading; block basic skills scheduling; skills banks of reading test items; diagnostic decoding tests; original supplementary games coded to the Twenty Basic Reading Skills and materials; materials coded to the decoding skills; learning stations and packets; newspaper reading unit; parent conferences; inservices and monthly newsletters for content area teachers; diagnostic/prescriptive notebooks; indoor and outdoor gardens; original videotape presentation; team teaching; and full-time building reading resource teacher.

In addition, central office administrators institute special projects; e.g., the involvement of Loyola University (Chicago) in a math/science/reading futurism project and the initiation of planning in order to procure federal monies to fund a teaching reading through drama project.

Supportive Services

Supportive services school personnel are deeply involved in the Basic Competencies Reading Program. Each school has a Basic Skills Coordinator freed one-half day all school year to administer city-wide tests and to perform guidance functions for Basic Skills students. School psychologists make individual psychological evaluations in order to determine proper

placement for some students. School social workers and aids attempt to alleviate adjustment and environmental problems which appear to be interfering with learning. School nurse practitioners provide auditory, visual, and health screening and make referrals to appropriate specialists and agencies. In one school, the school nurse practitioner conducted small group counseling sessions devoted to aiding hard-core disabled readers to improve in health, hygiene, and nutrition. One learning disabilities specialist per school serves clinical cases of reading disability.

Articulation

Articulation efforts currently are aimed toward objectives, curriculum, instruction, materials, and student evaluation for elementary and middle schools. Representatives from both levels are planning to meet jointly to examine each of the four areas for the purpose of making recommendations to facilitate articulation.

Summary

The city-wide competency-based reading program has been instrumental in bringing the secondary remedial/corrective reading program full circle to its beginning of twenty years ago; i.e., into focus. In addition, the Basic Competencies Program has generated the framework for a balanced reading program which provides reading instruction for all students at the middle school level. This evolution over the past twenty years reflects the on-going nature of program evaluation and revision and the involvement of administrative, teaching, and supportive personnel in seeking change and responding to change.